

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 15 wherein the first, second, third and fourth shut-off surfaces are radially symmetrical to an actuation axis of the actuator for translating the sealing element.
3. (Previously Amended) The valve of claim 2 wherein the actuator includes a tappet valve connected to the sealing element.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 3 wherein ~~cross-sections of the~~ first and second shut-off surfaces are connected to each other and arranged so each cross-section of the first and second surfaces as connected together in planes extending in the direction of longitudinal movement of the actuator ~~and surface parts of the sealing element which mate with the shut-off surfaces and are opposite the inlet form~~ forms an essentially continuous arcuate line.
6. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim ~~15~~ 11 wherein the first and second outlets and sealing element are arranged so that when ~~one of the outlets~~ the first outlet is shut off, the sealing element ~~with its~~ first shut-off surface ~~associated with its respective outlet rests on opposing~~ the third shut-off ~~surfaces~~ surface of a valve seat of the valve body to form an annular seal ~~sealing~~ surface.

7. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 15 wherein the ~~opposing first shut-off surfaces form~~surface forms an angle with the actuation axis at the annular sealing surface that is greater than or equal to 15°.

8. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 7 wherein the angle is at least 30E°.

9. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 15 wherein the ~~opposing third and fourth shut-off surfaces of the valve body~~ are formed of material that is softer and more elastic than the first and second shut-off surfaces of the sealing element.

10. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 9 wherein the ~~valve seat material~~ of the third and fourth surfaces is TEFLON.

11. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 15 wherein the ~~opposing third shut-off surfaces have~~surface has a step-shaped projection or a nose-shaped projection at one of the locations where the first and third surfaces intersect to form an annular seal~~at the annular sealing surface~~.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 15 wherein the outlets ~~are on both sides of the inlet and oppose~~ each other.

15. (Currently Amended) A valve for liquid separation, ~~especially for analytical or preparative liquid chromatography,~~ comprising a valve body having an inlet and at least ~~two~~first and

Serial No. 09/672,038

second outlets on opposite sides of the inlet, a sealing element ~~coupled with~~for closing, at different times, flow from the inlet ~~and outlets to~~the first outlet and from the inlet to the second outlet, the sealing element including first and second shut-off surfaces for alternately-respectively shutting off the first and second outlets, ~~the both of the first and second~~ shut-off surfaces including an arcuate segment, the first and second shut-off surfaces-respectively associated with the outlets being arranged to face away from each other, and being at a free end of an actuator, the ~~opposing~~valve body having third and fourth shut-off surfaces ~~of the valve body~~respectively associated with the first and second outlets, the third and fourth shut-off surfaces respectively being engaged by the first and second sealing surfaces when the first and second sealing surfaces respectively close the first and second outlets at different times, portions of the third and fourth shut-off surfaces respectively in closest proximity to the first and second outlets narrowing conically or as a funnel toward the ~~outlet~~first and second outlets that opposes the free end of the actuator, an outlet area being arranged between the ~~opposing~~third shut-off surface and ~~an~~the first outlet ~~channel~~, the outlet ~~channel area~~ having a conically narrowing opening surface.

16. (Currently Amended) A valve for liquid separation, ~~especially for analytical or preparative liquid chromatography~~, comprising a valve body having an inlet and at least ~~two~~first and

Serial No. 09/672,038

second outlets, a sealing element coupled with for closing, at
different times, flow from the inlet and outlets to the first outlet
and from the inlet to the second outlet, the sealing element
including first and second shut-off surfaces for alternately
respectively shutting off the first and second outlets, the both of
the first and second shut-off surfaces including an arcuate
segment, the first and second shut-off surfaces—respectively
associated with the outlets being arranged to face away from each
other, the valve body having third and fourth shut-off surfaces
respectively associated with the first and second outlets, the
third and fourth shut-off surfaces respectively being engaged by
the first and second sealing surfaces when the first and second
sealing surfaces respectively close the first and second outlets at
different times, the first and third sealing surfaces being—wherein
the outlets and sealing element are arranged so that when at the
first of the outlets outlet is shut off, the sealing element
assigned to seal the first outlet first surface rests on opposing
shut off surfaces of a valve seat of the valve body the third
surface to form an annular sealing surface seal, the opposing shut
off surfaces third surface having a step-shaped projection or nose-
shaped projection at the annular seal sealing surfaces.

17. (Currently Amended) A valve for selectively supplying fluid from an inlet port to an outlet port comprising a sealing element, a passage selectively opened and shut between the inlet

Serial No. 09/672,038

and outlet ports by the sealing element, the passage and the sealing element being arranged so there is relative longitudinal back and forth movement between them in first and second opposite directions along a longitudinal axis such that when the sealing element is at (a) a first position relative to the passage along the axis the sealing element is disengaged from the passage interior surface to provide a fluid flow path between the inlet and outlet ports, and (b) a second position relative to the passage along the axis the sealing element engages a portion of the passage interior surface to form a seal between the inlet and outlet ports, the sealing element including a tapered peripheral surface extending generally in the direction of the axis, portions of the peripheral surface being sized and arranged for selectively engaging portions of the passage interior surface to form the seal, the tapered sealing surface having cross sections of progressively larger perimeters along the axis such that the cross-section of the sealing element sealing surface closest to the outlet port has the smallest perimeter that is closer to the longitudinal axis than any other cross-section of the sealing element sealing surface, the passage interior surface including a tapered surface having cross sections of progressively larger perimeters along the axis such that the cross-section of the passage interior surface closest to the outlet port has the smallest perimeter that is closer to the longitudinal axis than any other cross-section of the passage

Serial No. 09/672,038

interior surface, the passage interior surface including first and second segments that are displaced from each other along the axis so that the first segment is closer to the outlet port than the second segment and the second segment is closer to the inlet port than the first segment, the perimeters of all cross sections of the second segment being greater than the perimeters of all cross sections of the first segment so all of the passage interior surfaces of the first segment are closer to the axis than all the passage interior surfaces of the second segment, the passage interior surface including a lip between adjacent portions of the first and second segments, the length of the lip in a direction at right angles to the axis being substantially less than (a) the distance between the axis and the perimeter of the cross-section of the first segment farthest from the outlet port and (b) the distance between the axis and the perimeter of the cross-section of the second segment closest to the outlet port, the tapered peripheral surface and the passage interior surface being sized, positioned and arranged so that (a) during initial movement of the sealing element from the first position toward the second position a flow path is provided between the inlet and outlet ports between the tapered peripheral surface of the sealing element and the passage interior surface including the first and second ~~second~~ segments, and (b) as the sealing element continues to move toward the outlet port the tapered sealing surface of the sealing element

Serial No. 09/672,038

engages the lip to form a seal and prevent fluid flow between the inlet and outlet ports, the spacings between the tapered sealing surface and the passage interior surfaces of the first and second segments while the flow path is provided during the initial movement of the sealing element being substantially less than (a) the distance between the axis and the perimeter of the cross-section of the first segment farthest from the outlet port, and (b) the distance between the axis and the perimeter of the cross-section of the second segment closest to the outlet port.

18. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 17 wherein the sealing element peripheral surface is arcuate and the passage interior surfaces of the first and second segments are frusto-conical.

19. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 18 wherein the sealing element peripheral surface is a segment of a sphere and cross sections of the passage interior surfaces in planes at right angles to the axis are circular.

20. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 19 wherein the lip is arranged to deform slightly in response to the sealing element continuing to move from the initial sealed state between the lip and the peripheral surface along the axis toward the outlet port to provide an annular ~~sealing surface~~seal having a length in

Serial No. 09/672,038

the direction of the axis that increases from the length of the annular ~~sealing surface~~seal when initial contact occurs between the sealing element peripheral surface and the lip.

21. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 17 wherein the lip is arranged to deform slightly in response to the sealing element continuing to move from the initial sealed state between the lip and the peripheral surface along the axis toward the outlet port to provide an annular ~~sealing surface~~seal having a length in the direction of the axis that increases from the length of the annular ~~sealing surface~~seal when initial contact occurs between the sealing element peripheral surface and the lip.

22. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 17, wherein the valve is arranged for selectively supplying fluid from the inlet port to a second outlet port via a second passage between the inlet port and second outlet port, the sealing element peripheral surface and the interior surface of the second passage being arranged so that a fluid flow path is provided between the inlet port and the second outlet port while the sealing element is at the ~~first~~second position and a seal is provided between the inlet port and the second outlet port while the sealing element is at the second position; the sealing element, the interior surface of the second passage and the interior surface of the second segment being arranged to provide a flow path between the inlet port and a surface of the sealing element for supplying fluid from the inlet

Serial No. 09/672,038

port to the surface of the sealing element to provide a fluid pressure for urging the sealing element against the lip while the sealing element is at the second position.

23. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 22 wherein the second passage is coaxial with the axis and the inlet port is between the second segment and the second outlet port, and further including an actuator for translating the sealing element between the first and second positions, the actuator including a shaft extending in the second passage along the axis, one end of the shaft being connected to the sealing element.

24. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 23 wherein the actuator shaft has circular cross sections at right angles to the axis so that the second passage has annular cross sections.

25. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 22 wherein the second passage includes a section with a continuous taper between the inlet port and the second outlet port, the taper of the second passage being such that the perimeter of the cross-section of the tapered section closest to the inlet port is greater than the perimeter of all other cross-sections of the tapered section and the perimeter of the cross-section of the tapered section closest to the second outlet port is smaller than the perimeter of all other cross-sections of the tapered section, and the portion of the sealing element peripheral surface for forming a seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port is tapered such that

Serial No. 09/672,038

when the sealing element seals the second outlet port cross sections of the sealing element peripheral surface closest to the inlet port have greater perimeters than cross sections of the sealing element peripheral surface closest to the second outlet port.

26. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 25 wherein the continuous taper of the second passage has a frusto-conical shape and the portion of the sealing element sealing surface for forming the seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port has an arcuate shape.

27. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 26 wherein the continuous taper of the second passage has circular cross sections at right angles to the axis and the portion of the sealing element peripheral surface for forming a seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port is a sector of a sphere.

28. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 22 wherein the sealing element and the passages are arranged so that as the sealing element translates between the first and second positions fluid flow paths are provided between the inlet port and both outlet ports.

29. (Currently Amended) A valve for selectively supplying fluid from an inlet port to an outlet port comprising a sealing element, a passage selectively opened and shut between the inlet and outlet ports by the sealing element, the passage and the

Serial No. 09/672,038

sealing element being arranged so there is relative longitudinal back and forth movement between them in first and second opposite directions along a longitudinal axis such that when the sealing element is at (a) a first position relative to the passage along the axis the sealing element is disengaged from the passage interior surface to provide a fluid flow path between the inlet and outlet ports, and (b) a second position relative to the passage along the axis the sealing element engages a portion of the passage interior surface to form a seal between the inlet and outlet ports, the sealing element including a tapered peripheral surface extending generally in the direction of the axis, portions of the peripheral surface being sized and arranged for selectively engaging portions of the passage interior surface to form the seal, the tapered peripheral surface having cross sections of progressively larger perimeters along the axis such that the cross-section of the sealing element sealing surface closest to the outlet port has the smallest perimeter that is closer to the longitudinal axis than any other cross-section of the sealing element sealing surface, the passage interior surface including a tapered surface having cross sections of progressively larger perimeters along the axis such that the cross-section of the passage interior surface closest to the outlet port has the smallest perimeter that is closer to the longitudinal axis than any other cross-section of the passage interior surface, the passage

interior surface including a lip, the tapered peripheral surface and the passage interior surface being sized, positioned and arranged so that (a) during initial movement of the sealing element from the first position toward the second position a flow path is provided between the inlet and outlet ports between the tapered peripheral surface of the sealing element and the passage interior surface, the lip being arranged to deform slightly in response to the sealing element continuing to move toward the outlet port from the initial sealed state between the lip and the peripheral surface along the axis to provide an annular ~~sealing surface~~seal having a length in the direction of the axis that increases from the length of the annular ~~sealing surface~~seal when initial contact occurs between the sealing element peripheral surface and the lip.

30. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 29 wherein the sealing element peripheral surface is arcuate and the passage interior surfaces of the first and second segments are frusto-conical.

31. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 30 wherein the sealing element peripheral surface is a segment of a sphere and cross sections of the passage interior surfaces in planes at right angles to the axis are circular.

32. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 30, wherein the valve is arranged for selectively supplying fluid from the inlet port to a second outlet port via a second passage between the inlet

port and second outlet port, the sealing element peripheral surface and the interior surface of the second passage being arranged so that a fluid flow path is provided between the inlet port and the second outlet port while the sealing element is at the ~~first~~second position and a seal is provided between the inlet port and the second outlet port while the sealing element is at the ~~second~~first position; the sealing element, the interior surface of the second passage and the interior surface of the second segment being arranged to provide a flow path between the inlet port and a surface of the sealing element for supplying fluid from the inlet port to the surface of the sealing element to provide a fluid pressure for urging the sealing element against the lip while the sealing element is at the ~~first~~second position.

33. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 32 wherein the second passage is coaxial with the axis and the inlet port is between the second segment and the second outlet port, and further including an actuator for translating the sealing element between the first and second positions, the actuator including a shaft extending in the second passage along the axis, one end of the shaft being connected to the sealing element.

34. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 33 wherein the actuator shaft has circular cross sections at right angles to the axis so that the second passage has annular cross sections.

35. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 32 wherein the second passage includes a section with a continuous taper between the inlet port and the second outlet port, the taper of the second passage being such that the perimeter of the cross-section of the tapered section closest to the inlet port is greater than the perimeter of all other cross-sections of the tapered section and the perimeter of the cross-section of the tapered section closest to the second outlet port is smaller than the perimeter of all other cross-sections of the tapered section, and the portion of the sealing element peripheral surface for forming a seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port is tapered such that when the sealing element seals the second outlet port cross sections of the sealing element peripheral surface closest to the inlet port have greater perimeters than cross sections of the sealing element peripheral surface closest to the second outlet port.

36. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 35 wherein the continuous taper of the second passage has a frusto-conical shape and the portion of the sealing element sealing surface for forming the seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port has an arcuate shape.

37. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 36 wherein the continuous taper of the second passage has circular cross sections at right angles to the axis and the portion of the sealing element

Serial No. 09/672,038

peripheral surface for forming a seal between the sealing element and the second outlet port is a sector of a sphere.

38. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 32 wherein the sealing element and the passages are arranged so that as the sealing element translates between the first and second positions fluid flow paths are provided between the inlet port and both outlet ports.

39. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 16 wherein the first, second, third and fourth shut-off surfaces are radially symmetrical to an actuation axis of the actuator for translating the sealing element.

40. (Previously Added) The valve of claim 39 wherein the actuator includes a tappet valve connected to the sealing element.

41. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 40 wherein ~~cross-sections of~~ the first and second shut-off surfaces are connected to each other and arranged so each cross-section of the first and second surfaces as connected together in planes extending in the direction of longitudinal movement of the actuator ~~and surface parts of the sealing element which mate with the shut off surfaces and are opposite the inlet form~~ forms an essentially continuous arcuate line.

42. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 41 wherein the ~~opposing~~ third shut-off ~~surfaces form~~ surface forms an angle with the actuation axis that is greater than or equal to 15°.

43. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 16 wherein the ~~opposing~~third shut-off ~~surfaces form~~surface forms an angle with the actuation axis at ~~the~~an annular ~~sealing surface~~seal at the intersection of the first and third surfaces when the first outlet is closed that is greater than or equal to 15°.

44. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 43 wherein the ~~opposing~~third and fourth shut-off surfaces ~~of the valve seat~~include material that is softer and more elastic than the first and second shut-off surfaces ~~of the sealing elements~~.

45. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 16 wherein the ~~opposing~~third and fourth shut-off surfaces ~~of the valve seat~~include material that is softer and more elastic than the first and second shut-off surfaces ~~of the sealing elements~~.

46. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 45 wherein the ~~opposing~~third shut-off ~~surfaces have~~surface has a step-shaped projection or nose-shaped projection at ~~the~~an annular seal between the first and third surfaces when the first outlet is closed~~sealing surface~~.

47. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim ~~16~~15 wherein the ~~opposing~~third shut-off ~~surfaces have~~surface has a step-shaped projection or nose-shaped projection at ~~the~~an annular seal between the first and third surfaces when the first outlet is closed~~sealing surface~~.

Serial No. 09/672,038

48. (Currently Amended) The valve of claim 16 wherein the first and second outlets are on ~~both~~opposite sides of the inlet and oppose each other.